

REMARKS

Upon entry of the amendments, claims 9, 11, and 13-16 will be all the claims pending in the application.

As a preliminary matter, Applicants would like to draw the Examiner's attention to the fact that an IDS was submitted at the time of filing the present application (November 21, 2001), but the Form PTO-1449 accompanying the IDS has not been returned to Applicants. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner attach an initialed and signed copy of the Form PTO-1449 to the next communication to Applicants.

Applicants have amended claims 9 and 11 consistent with the description at page 9, line 1 through page 10, line 16 of the specification, as well as original claim 5. New claims 13-16 are directed to the subject matter of claims 6 and 7, as originally filed.

I. Paragraph No. 1: Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 10 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite.

Claims 10 and 12 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, rendering this rejection moot.

II. Paragraph Nos. 3-4: Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 9-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Applicants' cited prior art (ACPA) in view of the English-language translation of JP 11-3884 ("JP '884").

Applicants respectfully traverse.

Claims 9, 11 and 13-16 of the present application are method claims consistent with apparatus claims 5-8 and 13 of the parent application (U.S. Serial No. 09/533,244), now issued

AMENDMENT
U.S. Appln. No. 09/989,162

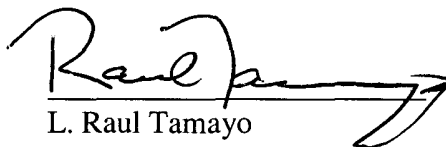
as U.S. Patent No. 6,336,975. Applicants respectfully submit that present claims 9, 11, and 13-16 are therefore also allowable, and the withdrawal of this §103 rejection is requested.

III. Conclusion

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, she is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


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PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE

Date: July 7, 2003

APPENDIX

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 10 and 12 are canceled.

The claims are amended as follows:

9. (AMENDED) A method for forming a thin film on a substrate by decomposing gas introduced to a surface of a substrate held by a substrate holding device having a cover body which is disposed in an area surrounding said substrate held by said substrate holding device, said cover body being able to open and close by rotational movement, said method comprising:

a step of preventing said gas introduced to said surface of said substrate from being influenced by outside air,

wherein a clearance between an upper face of said cover body and an upper face of said substrate is set to be 0.5 mm or less.

11. (AMENDED) A method for forming a thin film on a substrate by introducing gas to a surface of a substrate held by a substrate holding device having a cover body which is disposed in an area surrounding said substrate held by said substrate holding device, said cover body being able to open and close by rotational movement, by radiating said introduced gas with laser, by decomposing said introduced gas and then by suctioning and discharging decompositional by-products, said method comprising:

a step of preventing said gas introduced to said surface of said substrate from being influenced by outside air,

wherein a clearance between an upper face of said cover body and an upper face of said substrate is set to be 0.5 mm or less.

AMENDMENT

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Claims 13-16 are added as new claims.